# Salaatul-Istikharah

Islam, being the natural way, recognizes the innate human need for help in making decisions and has protected the faith of its followers from corruption and given them a sense of contentment and peace in their daily lives by providing guidance in this regard. That guidance consists of clear instructions to the believers to put their trust ultimately in God whenever decisions are to be taken.

When trust is placed in the divine decree, a sense of contentment and happiness is sure to follow. Jabir said, "The Prophet (pbuh) taught us to make the prayer seeking good in all affairs the way he taught us a chapter from the Qur'aan. He said, "If any of you decides on a matter, he should pray two units of voluntary prayer then say:

Allaahumma innee astakheeruka bi 'ilmika, wa astaqdiruka bi qudratika, wa as 'aluka min [O Allaah, I seek Your guidance to what is good for me because of your infinite knowledge, I seek Your help because of your power, and I ask You from Your great favor] Fa innaka taqdiru wa laa aqdiru, wa ta'lamu wa laa a'lamu, wa anta 'allaamul-ghuyoob [for surely You are able and I am not, You know and I do not, and You alone know the unseen] Allaahumma in kunta ta'lamu anna hathal amra khayrun lee fee deenee wa ma'aashee wa 'aaqibati amree (or fee 'aajilee amree wa aajilih) [O Allaah, if you know that this affair {mention the affair by name} is good for my religion, my livelihood and the aftermath of my affairs [or the short term of my affairs or its long term] faqdurhu lee wa yassirhu lee thumma baariklee feeh [then decree it for me, make it easy for me, and bless me in it] wa in kunta ta'lam anna haathal-amra sharrun lee fee deenee wa ma'aashee wa 'aaqibati amree (or fee 'aajilee amree wa aajilih) [but if you know that this affair {mention the affair by name} is bad for my religion, my livelihood and the aftermath of my affairs [or the short term of my affairs or its long term] fasrifhu 'annee wasrifnee 'anhu waqdurlee al-khayra haythu kaana, thumma rad-dinee bih [then turn it away from me and turn me away from it, and decree for me what is better wherever it may be, and make me and make me content with it.] 2

In keeping with the instruction of the Prophet (pbuh), given in the above mentioned hadith, when faced with a choice between two or more Halaal (permissible) actions 3 a decision should be arrived upon using one's intellect and knowledge of Islam. Having done this, one should then seek Allah's guidance as to the choice that has been made by making a two unit prayer (at a

permissible time 4), after which the aforementioned supplication called du'a al Istikharah should be said.

Unfortunately, contrary to the instructions of the Prophet (pbuh), Muslims today depend entirely on the prayer to make their decisions for them. That is, they make the prayer and supplication prior to making any decision, and rely on dreams to provide the answers for them. It is even common for people to ask others to make Istikharah on their behalf. The prayer is often repeated, prior to sleeping, for a set number of days and dream books are consulted to interpret the symbols in their dreams. All of this has no basis in the methodology taught by the Prophet (pbuh). However this is not to say that a good dream may nor be acted upon as confirmation of a decision, about which Istikharah was made.

---

Jabir as-Salamee was from the Madeenite tribe of Salimah (Fat-h al-Baaree, p.188).

Collected by al-Bukhari (Sahih Al Bukhaari. vol. 8, pp.259-60, no. 391), Abu Dawood, an-Nasaa'ee, at-Tirmidhi, Ibn Maajah and Ahmed.

Ibn Abee Jamrah quoted in Fat-h al-Baaree, p.188

The five prohibited times are: after the morning prayer (Salaatul-Fajr) until sunrise, while the sun is rising, when the sun reaches the meridian, after the afternoon prayer (Salaatul-'Asr) until the setting of the sun and while the sun is setting.